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ABSTRACT

A review of practical language and methodological activities in both Spanish and English to develop balanced bilingual proficiency in bilingual education teachers is geared toward college professors and teacher trainers. Suggested practical applications for developing language arts skills include all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is proposed that aural-oral skills can be strengthened through debate, interviews, and preparation and use of videotapes, audiotapes, and films. Recommended reading selections include those focusing on the role of the bilingual teacher within the school and community, bilingual education in general, and practical stories about or for bilingual children, which can serve as stimuli for further discussions or writing assignments. Varied types of writing assignments designed to provide the trainee with classroom-oriented skills, such as lesson-plan writing, vocabulary enrichment for content area subjects, and summaries of children's literature, are suggested. Charts coordinating skill areas with objectives, topics and sequential steps in developing the skills; listing evaluation criteria; and outlining a sample teacher-trainee learning contract form are appended. (MSE)

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Balancing English/Spanish Language Skills Proficiency in Bilingual Teacher Trainees: Some Practical Approaches

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A B S T R A C T

Balanced bilingual teachers play a key role in the success of bilingual/ESL programs today. This article reviews some of the competencies and state certification requirements for teacher language proficiency in both languages. Practical strategies are outlined for providing bilingual teacher trainees with activities that help them to enrich their own language skills while at the same time, offering useful classroom techniques and instructional strategies.

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BALANCING ENGLISH/SPANISH LANGUAGE SKILLS PROFICIENCY IN BILINGUAL TRAINEES: SOME PRACTICAL APPROACHES

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Introduction

In 1978, Congress clarified the intent of the Title VII Bilingual Education Act. The primary purpose of a bilingual education program was to help children become proficient in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English. Students with limited English language skills are to be assisted to understand instruction and to participate more effectively in school activities through the use of the home language at the same time that English language skills are being developed.

Bilingual teachers must demonstrate competencies generally considered essential for outstanding teaching in most academic areas. Particular competencies are also needed for effective performance in specific bilingual situations: the ability to communicate with children and their parents; the ability to teach the language familiar to the children; the ability to teach academic subjects such as science, mathematics and social studies in both English and the native language (Sutman, Sandstrom and Shoemaker 1979). In any bilingual program, the teaching of English is an important and integral part of helping students to use English for learning and communication purpose.

Bilingual teachers must be able to be students' linguistic models by demonstrating a reasonably balanced proficiency in each language. Balanced bilingual proficiency is seen as the ability to understand, speak, read and write both languages with grammatical and semantic correctness and accuracy. In many bilingual programs, there are two

major program designs: one holds the bilingual teacher solely responsible for the development of language skills in both languages; in the other one, the bilingual teacher presents subject matter in both languages and is supplemented by the services of an intensive English as a second language teacher.

Institutions of higher education have the main responsibility for preparing bilingual personnel, especially teachers, to effectively implement bilingual education. Demonstrated teaching proficiency in both the language of the target population as well as in English must be achieved prior to the college's recommendation for graduation and state bilingual education certification. As part of the responsibility to insure pedagogical and linguistic proficiency among prospective teachers, there have been efforts to identify the necessary skills that will demonstrate the abilities of bilingual trainees. Among the organizations and experts who have developed bilingual teacher competencies are: the Center for Applied Linguistics (1974), Blanco and Acosta (1978), Sutman, Sandstrom and Shoemaker (1979) and the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (1981).

At present, several states require teaching candidates to hold separate bilingual education certificates: Arizona, California, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Texas.

In addition to the state certificate, cities such as New York and Buffalo require teachers to have a bilingual education license in order to qualify to teach in a bilingual classroom. One of the main emphases for both the certificate and the license is to insure a mechanism by which to prepare and hire the best possible candidates, for whom bilingual proficiency is one of the most desirable characteristics.

The achievement of balanced bilingual proficiency is the major focus of this article. We are suggesting for the reader several practical language

and methodological activities in both languages to develop balanced bilingual proficiency. These activities are geared for use by college professors or teacher trainers who present language development activities in both languages as part of their methodological strategies to develop in their students a broad repertoire of successful techniques for the bilingual/ESL classroom.

Practical Applications for Developing Language Arts Skills in English and Spanish

Among the most practical and meaningful strategies for developing language arts techniques in bilingual teacher trainees is to require the trainees to use all four skills--listening, speaking, reading and writing--in preparing and using materials for the bilingual classroom. Aural-oral skills can be strengthened through debates, interviews, and the preparation and use of video and audiotapes as well as films. Reading selections can center around the role of the bilingual teacher within the school and community, bilingual education in general, and practical stories about or for bilingual children. (Such readings can serve as stimuli for further discussions or writing assignments). Varied types of writing assignments can be designed to provide the trainee with classroom-oriented skills: Lesson plan writing, vocabulary enrichment for content area subjects, and summaries of children's literature are among the viable possibilities. In the discussion that follows and in the charts on pages 6-8, we outline and share with the reader some of the successful activities (in English and Spanish) that we have found to be useful for trainees in our teacher-training institutions, as well as in pre-service workshops. Although the activities were used with Spanish/English bilingual trainees, they are applicable to other language groups.

Aural-oral skill experiences were developed through a multi-faceted approach. Participants invited secretarial and custodial workers--

with special hobbies, e.g., writing poetry, or common experiences, such as speaking another language or being a single parent--to be the subjects of a videotaped interview. The students planned their questions with assistance in grammatical structures provided by the ESOL instructor. Parents and community people were interviewed to compare experiences within the community or to share opinions of their children's progress after participating in a bilingual program. Senior citizens were interviewed to learn about the history of the neighborhood in which the college is situated. (It was hoped that the trainees would use some of these same techniques in the future with students in their own classrooms).

Following selected readings and viewing films, the trainees dialogued through the use of rhetorical debates, centered around the role of the Hispanic man/woman as a bilingual teacher as well as stereotypes of Hispanics depicted in various forms of the media. In addition, the trainees viewed such movies as, "Miguel, Up from Puerto Rico," and "Joey," after which they were encouraged to discuss the advantages as well as the problems faced by the bilingual child within the dominant culture and language. The ASCD'S videotape, Multicultural Education was also used to stimulate discussion as well as to elicit coments on multicultural techniques used in both elementary and secondary level classrooms.

In addition to readings concerning the goals of bilingual education, other informational readings provided familiarity with the English language or contrasted non-verbal gestures between English speakers and Spanish speakers. As indicated in chart I on page 7 we used "Sexism and Language: Two Dimensions," by Susan Melnick, and "Non-Verbal Communication Teacher

Training," by Judith Nine-Curt, to acquaint trainees with English expressions, structures and nuances of language that tend to be sex or culture-bound. Similarities and differences in perceptions held by the teacher and child can be explored and analyzed through reading and actually role-playing Nine-Curt's materials.

Multicultural children's literature gave the bilingual teacher trainees additional reading experiences in English. Trainees were taught to focus on the specific vocabulary words that they would need to present to their students. They prepared oral and written summaries that contrasted the similar and different experiences of children around the world as well as some stories that specifically dealt with the feelings of bilingual/bicultural youngsters such as the Native American story High Elk's Treasure by V. Driving Hawk Sneve, Crow Boy by Taro Yashima, and El South Bronx Remembered by Nicholasa Mohr.

Bilingual education/ESOL readings as well as children's literature lead to a variety of writing tasks: Trainees were required to summarize informational articles and outline two or three main ideas. They also had to develop a resource card file of summaries of children's multicultural literature and list follow-up language activities.

A trainee learning contract, similar to the sample on page 9 was developed to expand the writing activities based on a multi-media, multicultural language arts approach. All trainees were taught to write behavioral objectives and to organize sequential lesson plans for language arts activities in English and Spanish. Trainees could then choose to work in a group or individually on such projects as creating a large class book of writings, or designing activities based on children's multicultural literature. Group projects also included developing a language arts learning center that incorporated music, colors and sensory awareness activities to stimulate

writing skills. Thus, at the same time that the trainees were participating in learning assignments that helped to develop their own writing skills in English and Spanish, they were also experiencing and learning methods to stimulate youngsters to enjoy writing.

CHART I

Developing Language Skills in English and Spanish for Bilingual/Bicultural Teacher Trainees

Skill Area	Objectives	Topics and Sequential Steps and Processes in the Development of Objectives	Evaluation Criteria
Aural Oral Language Skills Comprehending and Speaking	1. Participants will conduct a panel discussion in English/Spanish on a topic related to bilingual education for 10 minutes.	1. Role of the Hispanic man/women as a bilingual teacher The "Anglicized" Hispanic teacher; stereotypes of the Hispanic female, male, child in the media Debates, role-playing, audio or videotapes 2. Analysis of similarities and differences in experiences between neighbors of different ethnic backgrounds in a neighborhood. Interviews with parents concerning children's experiences before/after participating in a bilingual program Interviews with senior citizens to learn about the history of a neighborhood.	1.a. Each trainee will participate actively in a debate for 10 minutes using the "fishbowl" technique. b. Evaluation of a recorded videotape will be made by the instructor and trainees. 2.a Trainees will prepare 5-7 oral written questions for the specific interview. b. Trainees will prepare individual audiotapes or small group videotapes for analysis in class.

CHART II

Skill Area	Objectives	Topics and Sequential Steps and Processes in the Development of Objectives	Evaluation Criteria
Reading Skills	1. Participants will read articles related to the topics of non-verbal communication, bilingual education, and sexism in languages and for each of the articles will identify the main ideas and details.	1. Readings and discussion of: a. "Sexism and Language: Two Dimensions" by Susan Melnick. b. "Non-Verbal Communication Teacher Training Packet" by C. Judith Nine-Curt. c. Bilingual Education by La Fontaine et al. d. ESL: An Interdisciplinary Approach--Vol. IV. Velazquez et al.	1. Each trainee will summarize a. the readings orally by selecting the main idea. b. Trainees will give their own reactions or relate experiences similar to those presented in the readings.
	2. Participants will read at least 10 multicultural children's books.	2. Readings will include such books as: All Of Us Came Across The Water Lucille Clifton: Once in Puerto Rico--Pura Belpre; Crow Boy--Taro Yashima; The Rabbi and the Twenty-nine Witches Marilyn Hirish.	2. a. Trainees will discuss and compare experiences of children in the stories as well as experiences from their own childhoods. b. Trainees will list orally how specific books can help develop self concept of bilingual children.

CHART III

Skill Area	Objectives	Topic and Sequential Steps and Processes in the Development of Objectives	Evaluation Criteria
Writing Skills	1. Participants can write a short summary of the main ideas presented in articles on non-verbal communication, bilingual education, and sexism in two languages.	1. Previously listed reading materials	1. Trainees will write a precis of each reading.
	2. Participants will write specific behavioral objectives and lesson plans for language arts and integrated curriculum areas.	2. Use of multicultural stories, drama, music, art for themes in lesson planning activities.	2. Each trainee will write 2 plans in English and 2 plans in Spanish for language arts. Evaluation will be made by the instructor.
	3. Participants will acquire and use relevant vocabulary in English/Spanish for a specific content area---math, science, art--integrated with reading in lesson plans and resource file.	3. Integration of content area projects with language arts activities.	3. a. Evaluation and sharing of plans through demonstration lessons for peers and instructor. b. Trainees will write extension activities for content area application to multicultural stories for their 10 resource file card summaries.
	4. Participants will develop and create a variety of language arts activities that utilize music, art, dramatics, and children's literature to stimulate creative language arts and writing skills in elementary/intermediate school youngsters.	4. Trainees will select suggested projects from learning contract and develop appropriate strategies and materials.	4. Trainees will prepare class books, puppet shows, or imaginative individual projects to be evaluated by peers and instructor.

CHART IV

CONTRACT

Please check the activities and grade you wish to work towards during this course.

To receive a grade of A all assignments must be B+ or better.
To receive a grade of B all assignments must be B or better.
To receive a grade of C all assignments must be C or better.

Course Number --- 1 credit

Grade A

_____ *1. Intensive behavioral objective and lesson plan writing sessions.

**2. Create and write 12 language arts activities.

3. Compile a resource file of 10 multicultural books and follow-up writing activities.

4. Develop a language arts project that incorporates music and writing activities,

or

Make a large class book around a community or multicultural theme.

5. Final examination.

Course Number --- 3 credits

Grade A

_____ *1. Intensive behavioral objective and lesson plan writing sessions

**2. Create and write 15 language arts activities.

3. Compile a resource file of 10 multicultural books and follow-up writing activities.

4. Participate in a group project to develop a language arts learning center, or special project

or

Develop an individual project that incorporates music, colors, or sensory awareness to stimulate writing activities.

5. Final examination

Grade B

_____ *1. Intensive behavioral objective and lesson plan writing sessions.

**2. Create and write 8 language arts activities

3. Develop a large class book of writings based on multicultural children's literature.

4. Final examination.

Grade B

_____ *1. Intensive behavioral objective and lesson plan writing sessions

**2. Create and write 12 language arts activities.

3. Participate in a group project to develop a special activity or learning center using creative drama, myths, folklore to stimulate writing experiences

Do #4 for 1 credit course for for a grade of A.

4. Final examination

Grade C		
_____	*1.	Intensive behavioral objective and lesson planning sessions
	**2.	Create and write at least 5 languages arts activities
	3.	Develop a resource file of multicultural literature and follow-up writing exercises. (min. 5)
	4.	Final examination

Grade C		
_____	*1.	Intensive behavioral objective and lesson planning sessions.
	**2.	Create and write at least 8 language arts activities.
	3.	Compile a resource file of 8 multicultural books and follow-up writing activities.
	4.	Develop a project that incorporates music, art, or dramatics and writing skills.
	5.	Final examination

*Students will develop these skills in class and at home.

**Students will develop these language arts activities during large group sessions. They may rewrite the activities to improve their grade and must do so on a continuous basis throughout the course.

Student's Signature _____

Instructor's Signature _____

Summary

There is a need for balanced bilingual teachers. Teacher trainees must have the opportunity to use all four skills in preparing and implementing materials for the bilingual classroom. This article has presented some samples to emphasize oral, reading, and writing skills. The idea behind each activity presented is that bilingual teacher trainees, by developing methodological activities for students, are at the same time polishing or enriching their own language skills.

It is hoped that the ideas presented here can be put into practice in classrooms of higher education institutions involved in training bilingual teacher trainees. Such practical techniques and strategies can form the basis for varied, stimulating learning environments for bilingual learners in classrooms throughout the country.

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